

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action mailed on August 6, 2008, in which claims 1-23 were rejected and claim 24 was withdrawn from consideration. With this Amendment, claims 20-23 are amended. All amendments are fully supported by the original specification and drawings. No new matter is added. In light of the foregoing amendments and following remarks, Applicant respectfully requests advancement of this application to allowance.

Election/Restriction

Claims 1-24 are subject to a restriction requirement. Group I includes claims 1-23. Group II includes claim 24. Applicant elects the claims of Group I (claims 1-23) for further prosecution in this matter, without traverse. Accordingly, claim 24 remains withdrawn.

Applicant notes that in section 2 of the Action, Group II is indicated as including only "Claim 11." However, Applicant believes this to be an error because Group II is also described as being "drawn to a method of extending a product line." Claim 24 is the only claim that includes "a method of extending a product line." Applicant respectfully requests that Group II be clarified as including only claim 24, and not including claim 11.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 21 and 22 are rejected under §112 as being indefinite. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection. However, in an effort to advance this application to allowance, claims 21 and 22 are amended.

Claim 21 is amended to remove the reference to "a mathematical address." Specifically, claim 21 now recites "(b) converting the color information to an electronic database address" and "(c) mixing different colored inks to provide ink comprising a custom color according to the electronic database address."

Claim 22 is also amended to remove the reference to "a mathematical address." Specifically, claim 22 now recites "wherein converting the color information comprises using an L*A*B* color match system to convert a color to determine the address of the color in the electronic database."

Reconsideration and allowance of claims 21-22 are respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claim 20 is rejected under §102(b) as being anticipated by Palmer et al (U.S. Publication No. 2002/0024479). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection. However, in an effort to advance this application to allowance, claim 20 is amended. Palmer fails to disclose all elements of claim 20.

Claim 20 is directed to a method of providing custom-colored window coverings, comprising the steps of:

- a) receiving an order for a window covering, wherein the order includes a physical sample for color-matching;
- b) mixing different colored inks to provide ink to match the physical sample provided in the order;
- c) cutting the window covering according to the order from a blank bulk material; and
- d) applying the ink to the window covering to provide a custom-colored window covering.

Palmer is directed to a system and method for applying a decorative element to a window covering. Palmer explains that the system is used to apply the decorative element to the window covering in a retail store. (Abstract) The process shown in FIG. 5 involves selecting a window covering (86), selecting a decorative element (88), and apply decorative element to window covering (102).

Palmer fails to disclose “cutting a window covering according to the order from a blank bulk material” after “receiving an order for a window covering, wherein the order includes a physical sample for color matching.

Palmer does describe “sizing” the window covering before or after a decorative element is applied. Paragraph 0037. However, this sizing is not “from a blank bulk material,” as recited in claim 20. For example, paragraph 0035 describes printing directly on a vane of a window covering. Therefore, the vanes must have been previously made prior to the subsequent sizing

process. Further, Palmer does not describe the process of making the vanes themselves as being performed “according to the order” as recited in claim 20.

Reconsideration and allowance of claim 20 are respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-19, and 21-23 are rejected under §103(a) as being obvious over Applicant Admitted Prior Art (AAPA) in view of Palmer et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2002/0024479). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection. However, in an effort to advance this application to allowance, claim 21 is amended.

A. Claim 1

Claim 1 is directed to a method of fabricating window coverings that comprises a particular set of sequential steps. The steps include the following:

- a) receiving orders for custom-colored window coverings;
- b) formulating a layout for cutting blank bulk window covering material to accommodate the orders;
- c) cutting the bulk window covering material according to the layout; and
- d) applying color to the cut material;

wherein the window covering material has a front surface and a back surface.

Both the AAPA and Palmer fail to disclose or suggest the sequential steps performed in the order defined in claim 1. For example, the cited references fail to disclose “receiving orders for custom-colored window coverings” and then “cutting the bulk window covering material.”

Paragraph 6 of applicant’s disclosure refers to a process of making custom window coverings from pre-colored bulk material. The process involves receiving an order for a pre-colored window covering at a retail store, passing on the order information to a fabricator, cutting the material from pre-colored bulk material, and delivering the product to the customer.

One of the drawbacks of such a process is that the fabricator must have in stock a large quantity of various pre-colored materials. Alternatively, the customer will be limited to selecting

from only several available pre-colored materials. Furthermore, as discussed in paragraph 9 of applicant's disclosure, this process also results in a large amount of waste being generated.

Palmer is directed to a system and method for applying a decorative element to a window covering. Palmer explains that the system is used to apply the decorative element to the window covering in a retail store. (Abstract) The process shown in FIG. 5 involves selecting a window covering (86), selecting a decorative element (88), apply decorative element to window covering.

It would not have been obvious to modify the cited reference to result in the method defined in claim 1, because both AAPA and Palmer fail to disclose each of the sequential steps defined in claim 1. For example, both AAPA and Palmer fail to disclose "cutting bulk window covering material" after "receiving orders for custom-colored window coverings."

B. Claim 21

Claim 21 is directed to a method of providing custom-colored window coverings. The method comprises the steps of:

- a) receiving an order for a window covering, wherein the order includes color information;
- b) converting the color information to an electronic database address;
- c) mixing different colored inks to provide ink comprising a custom color according to the electronic database address;
- d) cutting the window covering according to the order from a blank bulk material; and
- e) applying the ink to a neutral-colored, window covering to provide a custom-colored window covering.

Similar to the reasons noted above with respect to claim 1, both the AAPA and Palmer fail to disclose or suggest the elements recited in claim 21. For example, the cited references fail to disclose "receiving an order for a window covering" and then "cutting the window covering according to the order from a blank bulk material." It would not have been obvious to modify the AAPA and Palmer to arrive at the present application because the cited references fail to disclose these elements.

C. Conclusion and Dependent Claims 2-19, and 22-23

For at least the foregoing reasons, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1 and 21, as well as claims 2-19 and 22-23 that ultimately depend therefrom, are respectfully requested.

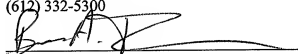
Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance. There may be additional reasons that the pending subject matter is patentably distinct from the cited references in addition to those discussed herein. Applicant reserves the right to raise any such arguments in the future. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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